

Evening Telegraph

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1870.

The earliest regular edition of THE EVENING TELEGRAPH goes to press at 1 1/2 o'clock, and the subsequent regular editions at 2 1/2, 3 1/2, and 4 1/2. Whenever there is important news of the progress of the European war, extra editions will be issued after this hour, and before the regular time for the early edition.

THE SURRENDER OF METZ.

The surrender of Metz makes another important addition to the long catalogue of triumphs achieved by the German armies in France, and this new acquisition is so valuable that it gives King William a very fair excuse for closing the war. With Strasburg and Metz in his possession he has not only the best available guarantees against a future French invasion, but he has virtual control of the old German territory lying west of the Rhine, which the Germans have so long coveted, and he can scarcely hope to obtain from the most unqualified military success more complete indemnity for the past or more ample security for the future.

It is alleged that Bazaine's surrender was not necessitated by a lack of supplies, and that he acted either in the interest of the deposed Imperial dynasty or with the more patriotic view of exacting, in return for his surrender, a promise that the German armies should be withdrawn from France. If the charges made against Bazaine by the republicans are well founded, they furnish another fearful illustration of the worthlessness of the standing armies of France for good purposes; and the people will be forced to realize more clearly than ever the necessity for self-reliance and for destroying an organization that oppresses them in peace and disgraces them in war.

The next development in this complicated and bloody drama will be awaited with intense interest. It remains to be seen whether the war is to end now, with the fall of Metz and the virtual acquisition of Alsace and Lorraine by the victors, or whether new horrors are to flow from Bazaine's surrender. If the siege of Paris is to be continued, the German armies heretofore employed in the investment of Metz will greatly increase the number of the besiegers, and the French capital is in more serious danger now than at any former period. But it is to be hoped that peace is near at hand, and that the surrender of Metz will avert further bloodshed instead of inciting new struggles.

THE CENSUS OF PHILADELPHIA.

In both branches of City Councils a disposition was manifested yesterday to provide for a correct census of Philadelphia by the municipal authorities, and we hope that at the next meeting a plan will be perfected whereby this important object can be accomplished. There should be no serious difficulty in ascertaining the number of inhabitants of the city, and intelligent policemen are probably better qualified by their local knowledge to perform this duty faithfully than any other class of appointees. If our citizens generally would co-operate in this task, increased accuracy would be assured. Marco Polo, in writing more than five hundred years ago of the Chinese cities, said that every household was required to put on the outer walls of his dwelling a written statement setting forth the age and name of each occupant. If such data were furnished in every instance here, census-taking would be an easy performance. We can scarcely expect, however, that all Philadelphia householders would comply with a similar requirement, but there are doubtless many thousands who would fill up, and have ready on any given day that might be appointed, a blank form containing the requisite information in the proper shape. In the localities where this information is not cheerfully and voluntarily given, the policemen would be more likely to extract the truth, and to know when the whole truth was told to them, than assistant marshals; and a large majority of householders, by filling up blank statements, would so much lighten the labors of the proposed new census-takers that they would have ample time to devote to districts where ignorance, prejudice, indifference, or crime prompt concealment of the number and names of the inhabitants.

MILITARY INTERFERENCE AT ELECTIONS.

The Democrats of New York are in a terrible state of wrathful excitement over the now assured fact that there will be a large force of United States soldiers in readiness on election day for the purpose of preserving order and of protecting every citizen, without regard to color, race, or party, in the free exercise of his right of suffrage. The interference of the marines, by order of Marshal Gregory, at our own election, a few weeks ago, was so sudden and unexpected that, with the exception of the silly and impotent protest of the Mayor, who had provoked himself either unwillingly or incompetently to protect the negro voters in the Fifth ward, the Democracy did not have a chance to give voice to its indignation until the whole affair was over. Since then, however, the Age has been lamenting over the prospect of our liberties being overturned by a military President, and its lamentations and those of the New York World and other organs of the "unterrified" have been changed to shouts of wrath at the absolute certainty that the same experiment will be tried upon a much larger scale in New York on the 8th of November next, in case the Democrats undertake to resort to their usual methods of securing the political control in that city by fraudulent voting and driving their opponents from the polls.

THE COST OF A FIREMAN'S RIOT.

The importance of a radical change in the Fire Department was shown yesterday by the presentation of a claim for damages to property by fire, growing out of the firemen's riot on the morning of October 9. This claim amounts only to the small sum of \$300, and the claimant almost apologizes for being obliged to make it. He says:—"I ask nothing more than the actual cost of replacing the property destroyed, which is about \$300. The loss is a small one, but let me assure you it is a very serious one to me at this time." Presuming this claim to be a just one—and we have no reason to believe anything to the

contrary—the city is clearly responsible, and if a suit was to be brought a much larger sum than \$300 could in all probability be recovered. The city is bound to make good the loss in this case, as it is in every case of property destroyed by riot, but there is a double responsibility inasmuch as this particular loss was occasioned by a vicious system that exists by authority of the city. Whatever might have been the advantages of the volunteer Fire Department in times past, it is very evident that Philadelphia has now outgrown them, and that we need a more perfect organization that will be under the control of the municipal authorities in a manner that the present department never can be. Councils have shown a commendable desire to give this subject the attention it deserves, and to organize a paid Fire Department upon a proper basis at as early a day as possible. If anything were needed to quicken their action and to demonstrate the necessity for a change it would be such a demand as that made in the communication referred to. If the city is obliged to pay a bill of damages whenever the volunteer firemen choose to amuse themselves with a riot, those who are opposed to a change in the system of extinguishing fires, or are indifferent to it, will very shortly be inclined to other opinions. With regard to the bill for damages for the riot of October 9th, we are only thankful that it is no larger than it is, for from the manner in which some of the volunteer firemen have been acting of late, it is remarkable that claims of the most extensive character against the city have not been presented.

THE MODERN NEWSPAPER.

ONE of the essays read before the Social Science Association was the production of Hon. George A. Yeaman, of Kentucky, the present Minister of the United States at Copenhagen, who chose for his theme "The Press: Its Relations and Influences." This essay is conceived in the spirit of Dr. Rush's condemnation of the "disjointed thinking" of the daily newspapers, and its author displays a remarkable degree of ignorance of the subject he is discussing, as well as a total lack of comprehension of what the press is and what it does. He alleges that "minds of the highest culture derive no benefits from, and seldom occupy themselves with, newspaper reading," and as he probably fancies that he is a distinguished representative of this exalted class, we presume that he rarely condescends to read the news of the day, or to learn the true character of the journals which he condemns. We cannot easily account in any other way for his assertions that all newspaper writers chain themselves to a mediocre level, and that editorial thinking is almost invariably superficial or false. Mr. Yeaman is unable to comprehend that the modern newspaper is a thing of the day and for the day, giving on current topics information and reflections a thousand times more accurate, extensive, and correct than those placed within the reach of the masses of the people before newspapers were established. The leading idea of his essay, so far as it embodies any idea whatever, is that the press deserves condemnation because it does not, in addition to the great duty of keeping the public well apprised of all events of general interest, instruct them in ancient lore and tell them many other things in which sage students only are interested. He has no right to expect that a corps of writers who are numbered by the thousand, and who have no time to elaborate their productions, shall equal in talent the masters of literature who can be counted, through a course of centuries, by the dozen, and who devoted years of persistent effort to their best works. It is silly to denounce the press for its inability to summon a Socrates and a Homer into every sanctum, or to expect that hurried comments will be characterized by the profundity that is born of prolonged thought and careful study. Besides, Mr. Yeaman is apparently unconscious of the marked improvement, in many respects, of modern journalism; and while he complains that the masses fall under inferior leadership, he should contrast the opportunities for enlightenment now possessed by the average newspaper reader with those placed within the reach of men who are dependent for their knowledge of politics to peripatetic stump-speakers, and for their familiarity with the news of the day to vague rumors or disjointed oral communications.

interference on such an occasion as much as any one can, but there are few fair-minded men of either political party who will undertake to deny that there was good reason for the action of the United States authorities on that occasion, and that in the case of New York the presence of a large military force will do more to secure a fairer election in that city than has been held for years than any course that could be adopted. The law passed by Congress at the last session made it the duty of the President to do all in his power to protect every voter in his right of suffrage, and to insure a fair election wherever United States officers were to vote for; and it needs no argument to prove that the only way the President can do this in New York is by adopting exactly the course that he has. The Democrats know as well as we do that the military will not interfere to prevent any voter of their party from approaching the polls and depositing his ballot in a quiet and orderly manner; and if they can win the election by fair means they will be permitted to reap all the fruits of it without opposition.

It is because the Democrats fear to trust a fair election, lest they should be overthrown, that they clamor against the action of the President in providing a military force for the purpose of preventing the usual scenes of fraud and violence; and even if the President were not fortified by a positive law of Congress, the law-abiding citizens of the country would thank him for stretching his authority to aid the decent people of New York to free themselves from the Democratic outlaws who have made the government of that city one of the greatest scandals of the age. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies, and the government of New York has been reduced to that condition that the ruffianly class have completely obtained the upper hand, so that the presence of a military force of sufficient strength to prevent riot and to enable the election to be really an expression of the will of the people, is a thing that respectable people have occasion to be thankful for.

We object to seeing a military force in attendance upon election day, because it is humiliating to think that there should be a necessity for it, and because it sets a bad precedent; but it is simply laughable for the Democrats to pretend to believe that because the President has taken the course he has for the execution of the laws and for the protection of citizens in their most sacred rights, he has sinister designs upon the liberties of the country, and that these are the first steps towards a military despotism with Grant as dictator. Our liberties are in far more danger from the demoralization of our party politics that enables the worst men in such communities as Philadelphia and New York to obtain the most important offices of trust and honor than they are from all the soldiers that Grant or any other President can command, and in New York, especially, it is high time a fair election was held, even if it has to be done under the guardianship of the bayonets of United States troops.

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